Reviewer’s report

Title: Dental hygienists’ perceptions of professionalism are multidimensional and context-dependent: A qualitative study in Japan

Version: 0 Date: 26 Sep 2017

Reviewer: Kimberly Coulton

Reviewer's report:

The topic of this paper is very interesting, especially given the historical development of the dental hygiene profession in Japan. It is not clear from the article that the authors are aware of the fact that competencies, codes of conduct and standards of professionalism have been well defined, and integrated into the educational programs, for dental hygiene in many countries. For this reason, the article should reflect throughout the paper on the lack of professionalism guidelines for dental hygiene and dental hygiene education programs in Japan. The authors should also consider that the roles of the dental hygienist in Japan, which are described in the background section, are not necessarily the same for hygienists in other countries, such as Australia or the United States where the dental hygiene profession originated. I think the information gained from this study will be useful in Japan and in countries which have not yet defined professionalism for dental hygienists.

The use of a purposive sample is appropriate; however, there was no information provided about the selection process - of the participants or the hospitals in which the participants were working. It is also recommended that more information be provided about the interviewer or interviewers. It is also suggested that the literature review include key references that are more recent that 10-15 years. The Van de Camp, et al. (2004) is referred to quite often and used as the basis for the analysis of the study - more current literature may have better defined professional categories. The tables were not included in the paper for review.

A few misspelled words, grammatical and language (choice of words) errors were identified. The review was unfamiliar with the terms/phrases 'breaking the deadlock,' 'novice dental hygienists,' 'super-aging'- it is suggested these be defined for the reader.
Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

No

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

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